

MAKING GOOD  
By George Elmer Cobb

Whenever Dan Beasley needed food or a drink or a dime to pay for a bed, he invariably made a claim to having a past where meritorious work was his portion.

"I'm no lazy 'bo, friend," he would say. "I've strung wire half over the country," and he showed a pair of nippers that belonged to the kit of a telegraph construction crew.

If encouraged, Dan would dilate on remarkable exploits in his line, well seasoned with peril and hardship. If presented with a query as to present lack of employment he would cite old age and younger men crowding him out.

Dan was tired of cheap lodging houses at Wolverton and wanted to get to Crescent, where a real metropolis presented variety and a broader field for the exploitation of his peculiar genius. He swung onto the platform of the last car as the 8:11 pulled out of the depot. Dan was familiar with railroad ways and time schedules. He knew that the 8:11 was a through train to Crescent, with an express car attached. The chance of discovery by some lynx-eyed conductor, even huddled up in the shadow of the lower step as he was, were entirely against him, but to compensate for that the probabilities were that he would not be kicked off, nor would the train be stopped especially to put him off.

Dan fairly cleared the door of the rear car when it opened and a man came out. Dan scrunched close, but felt easier as he observed that the intruder wore no uniform. It was only a passenger come out on to the platform to get a breath of fresh air and puff at a cigarette. He noticed Dan, but made no remark. His smoke being of contemplated brief duration, the passenger had not taken the trouble to go ahead into the smoking car.

"Tickets" and the door swung open and the conductor appeared, punched the bit of pasteboard presented and then noticed Dan.

"Stowaway?" he observed smartly. "You'll have to vacate."

"Where to—Pullman or chair car?" grinned Dan, coming to his feet. "You ain't the kind to fire me into the ditch, your face shows that. Have a heart, boss. I've seen better days. See," and Dan presented the inevitable last tool of his former call-



"What is it?" He Grumbled.

ing. "Lineman once, and a good one. Lift me to Crescent, won't you?"

The conductor growled some uncomplimentary remarks, evidently deciding to make the best of it, and retired, slamming the door after him. The passenger dropped his half-consumed cigarette. It fell to the platform. Greedily Dan picked it up and with a chuckle of rare content placed it between his lips, puffing luxuriantly.